

The next meeting is November 6, 2007



Town of Wenham
Wenham Issues of Social Service Housing
Meeting of Tuesday, October 2, 2007 ~ 3:30 PM
Senior Center, School Street

Present: Susan Harnisch, Chair; Ann Mulry- Shaw; Don Luxton; Cal Perkins; Tom Tanous
Not Present: Sue Bannon; Don Killam; Pat Purdy; Susan Carp; Jack Hauck; Margaret Scoglio;
Also Present: Catherine Tinsley, Secretary

Abbreviations used:

WISSH - Wenham Issues of Social Service Housing

Public information provided:

Agenda

Ms. Harnisch called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m.

Susan Harnisch - WISSH Coordinator

Ms. Harnisch reported the following:

- ❖ WISSH Account balance: \$24,583.60
- ❖ There were no requests for financial assistance in the month of September.
- ❖ There has been no article regarding WISSH in the Chronicle; the new editor will be contacted and ask that an article about WISSH be run a few times a month.
- ❖ The BOS authorized that the Home Consortium Funds for 2005 be given to the Habitat of Humanity of Cape Anne as recommended by the WISSH Committee.

WISSH Policy & Procedure and By Laws

The Committee completed the annual review of the WISSH Policy & Procedures and Bylaws. Article VIII which identifies the members is not current and will be updated. The Committee agreed that the year a person's term expires be identified and listed after the member's name.

It was suggested that the Chair position is rotated.

Miscellaneous

Ms. Harnisch informed the Committee that she has a meeting on October 9th with Frank Sullivan, the Hamilton Wenham Regional High School Director of Guidance to give him information about WISSH as a connection to Wenham families.

The Committee discussed how to better connect with the local churches and who will be the best person to contact.

The Committee discussed the following letter to be included in the water bills (or sent directly to those who do not receive a water bill from the town).

The Chair asked for the Committee to assist with sending the letters.

Dear Wenham Residents,

The committee for Wenham Issues of Social Service & Housing (WISSH) is in need of your help. We may no longer be able to assist Wenham residents who are experiencing a financial emergency situation, unless it receives financial assistance from the community. In terms of funding, WISSH does not receive funding from the Wenham Town Budget.

Since 1998, the committee has assisted 121 individuals or families who have met the financial assistance criteria. As you might expect, residents are proud and find it very difficult to ask for emergency financial assistance. Given the large increase in household expenses for utilities, food, and healthcare over the past several years, there has been a growing need to financially assist Wenham residents. Some residents have had their utilities turned off as a result of inability to pay these growing expenses. WISSH maintains strict confidentiality guidelines utilizing a number coded process when providing financing for residents.

As of the 2000 census, there were 115 individuals and 11 families living below the poverty level in Wenham. It seems highly likely that those numbers have increased in 2007. There will be another census taken in 2010 with updated statistics.

WISSH is of immeasurable value to Wenham residents who are in financial need. Wenham has always been a caring and a generous community. The WISSH Committee is in need of financial contributions in order to perpetuate this valuable community program. All contributions will be gratefully accepted and are tax deductible.

Please make checks payable to:
Town of Wenham

Wenham Town Hall
138 Main Street
Wenham, MA 01984

4:20 PM – Mr. Luxton made a motion to adjourn and it was unanimous to do so.